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ANNUAL REPORT

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1951.

R. H. WATSON, M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

BOROUGH OF BRIDGWATER

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1951

Health Department,
Albert Street,
Bridgwater.

July, 1952.

To:-

The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Bridgwater.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1951. The health of the community has been satisfactory, there being no major epidemics of illness, apart from an outbreak of influenza in the earlier part of the year which, although widespread, was of short duration and caused no great interference with services. No doubt treatment with the latest antibotics helped to prevent many of the complications associated with earlier outbreaks of this disease and which were responsible for so many deaths. Nevertheless, this outbreak took its toll of the older members of the community.

The death rate for the year was 14.11, which shows an increase over that for the previous year. The increased number of deaths was largely attributable to influenza and diseases of the respiratory system. Of 313 deaths 232 were of people over the age of 70 years.

The birth rate of 19.16 shows a slight increase over that for the previous year, while the still birth rate and infantile mortality rate show satisfactory reductions to 20.74 and 16.47 respectively.

The vital statistics compare favourably with those for the County as a whole.

I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committss for their support, Mr. Lean and his assistants for their excellent co-operation, and the Heads of other Departments for their assistance during the year.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

R.H. WATSON.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (Acres)	1,893
Population (Registrar General's estimate) 1951	22,180
No. of inhabited houses on 31st December, 1951	5,997
Rateable value on 31st December, 1951	£134,818
Sum represented by 1d rate on 31st December, 1951	£ 530

VITAL STATISTICS

In the following tables the figures in brackets represent the corresponding figures for the previous year.

Live Births

	Male		Female		Total	
Legitimate	204	(204)	205	(189)	409	(393)
Illegitimate	10	(8)	6	(8)	16	(16)
	214	(212)	211	(197)	425	(409)

Birth Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population 19.16 (18.07)

Comparative figure for England and Wales 15.5
Comparability factor for the District 0.98

Still Births 9

Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live & still births) 20.74 (39.12)

Death Rate. Total number of deaths 313 (290)

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 14.11(12.77)

Comparative figure for England and Wales 12.5
Comparability factor for the District 0.96

Infantile Mortality (Deaths of infants under one year of age)

Legitimate	7	(11)
Illegitimate	-	(2)
	7	13

Rate of all infants per 1,000 births 16.47 (31.74)
Rate for all legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births 17.11 (27.99)
Rate for all illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births Nil (125.00)

Infantile Mortality during 1951

Causes of death	Under 1 wk.	1-2 wks	3-4 wks.	1-6 mths.	6-12 mths.	Total under 1 yr.
Bronchopneumonia	-	-	1	2	1	4
Heart failure	-	1	1	-	-	1
Ascending Meningeal infection	-	-	-	1	-	1
Icterus gravis neonatorum	1	-	-	-	-	1
TOTAL	1	1	1	3	1	7

Other Deaths

Deaths from Malignant Neoplasms	39
Deaths from Measles	-
Deaths from Whooping Cough	-
Deaths from Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	1

Causes of Death during 1951

Cause of Death	M	F	Total
All causes	158	155	313
1. Tuberculosis of the respiratory system	3	3	6
2. Other forms of tuberculosis	-	-	-
3. Syphilitic disease	1	-	1
4. Diphtheria	-	-	-
5. Whooping Cough	-	-	-
6. Meningococcal infection	1	-	1
7. Acute Poliomyelitis	-	-	-
8. Measles	-	-	-
9. Other infective and parasitic diseases	-	-	-
10 Malignant neoplasm of stomach	3	1	4
11. Malignant neoplasm of lung, bronchus	1	-	1
12. Malignant neoplasm of breast	-	4	4
13. Malignant neoplasm of uterus	-	5	5
14. Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	14	11	25
15. Leukaemia, aleukaemia	-	-	-
16. Diabetes	1	-	1
17. Vascular lesions of the nervous system	10	23	33
18. Coronary disease and angina	23	10	33
19. Hypertension with heart disease	6	4	10
20. Other heart diseases	31	50	81
21. Other circulatory diseases	4	3	7
22. Influenza	7	9	16
23. Pneumonia	6	6	12
24 Bronchitis	11	9	20
25. Other diseases of respiratory system	-	1	1
26. Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	-	1
27. Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	-	1	1
28. Nephritis and nephrosis	-	1	1
29. Hyperplasia of prostate	6	-	6
30. Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	-	1	1
31. Congenital malformations	3	2	5
32. Other defined and ill-defined diseases	12	6	18
33. Motor vehicle accidents	3	1	4
34. All other accidents	10	3	13
35. Suicide	1	1	2
36. Homicide and operations of war	-	-	-

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

The following table sets out the cases of notifiable diseases that occurred in the Borough during 1951. The table is drawn up after making the necessary corrections in diagnosis by either the practitioners or the Medical Officers at the Isolation Hospitals.

Disease	Cases notified 1951	1950
Dysentery	-	1
Scarlet Fever	5	24
Whooping Cough	33	33
Measles	233	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	1
Acute Primary Pneumonia	5	-
Acute Poliomyelitis	-	7
Erysipelas	-	3
TOTAL	278	72

It will be seen that the considerable increase in the incidence of notifiable infectious diseases is due to the usual biennual outbreak of measles. Arrangements have been made by the Public Health Laboratory Service to supply doctors with serum which may be used to give a passive immunity to young and debilitated children who are closely exposed to infection with measles, and who would be exposed to undue risk by contracting the disease. The immunity thus produced is of a temporary nature and is used simply to tide them over a period of undue risk. The serum is available to all doctors.

Infantile Paralysis

Although there was a moderate incidence of infantile paralysis in Somerset, no cases were notified in Bridgwater.

Diphtheria

No cases of diphtheria were notified. This satisfactory state of affairs is almost entirely due to the nation wide immunisation campaign which was begun in 1942. The following table shows the incidence and number of deaths from diphtheria in England and Wales since 1944 and clearly shows the progress which has been made.

Year	Deaths	Corrected Notifications
1944	934	23,199
1945	722	18,596
1946	472	11,986
1947	244	5,609
1948	156	3,575
1949	84	1,890
1950	49	962
1951	34 +	699 +
	+ provisional	

The reason that this campaign was so successful was that, with the horrors of diphtheria fresh in their minds, parents were anxious to have their children immunised, with the result that a large percentage of the susceptible population were protected. However, the very success of the campaign is tending to produce an atmosphere of false security, and while parents are still willing to have their children immunised, many are not prepared to exert themselves to have it done. This is proved by the number of children who are unprotected on entering school, but who are then immunised simply because the doctor calls at the school and this relieves parents of all effort, other than signing a consent form. It is considered that 75% of babies should be immunised before their first birthday, if we are to avoid the risk of diphtheria outbreaks recurring, and records available at the end of the year showed that in Bridgwater, the percentage of children aged two to five years who were immunised, was less than 50%.

Children may be immunised by their family doctors, or at a special immunisation clinic which is held at the Health Centre, Mount Street, at 11.00 a.m. on every Friday, or at the Infant Welfare Clinic, which is held at the Church Hall, Bath Road Estate, in the afternoon of the second and fourth Thursday of the month.

Diphtheria Immunisation

The following table shows the number of children who completed a course of immunisation during the year.

Aged under 5 years	Aged 5 - 15 years	Total
258	170	428

Tuberculosis

There were 39 cases of respiratory and 6 cases of non-respiratory tuberculosis notified during the year. The figure for respiratory cases is 2 more than the previous year.

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951
No. of cases notified - Pulmonary	47	73	35	41	37	39
No. of cases notified - Non-Pulmonary	5	14	10	7	5	6
No. of deaths - Pulmonary	14	10	14	8	11	6
No. of deaths - Non-Pulmonary	1	6	-	-	2	-
Death rate of respiratory tuberculosis per 1,000of population	0.69	0.48	0.63	0.36	0.49	0.27

As a means of detecting early and unsuspected cases of tuberculosis, arrangements were made for the Mass Radiography Unit of the South West Regional Hospital Board to visit Bridgwater in July. The attendance was very satisfactory and the unit visited the larger factories before being stationed at the Health Centre.

The survey was attended by 4146 persons (2,478 males and 1,668 females). 180 were recalled for further examination: 100 of these were regarded as significant cases and on further investigation they were divided into 47 non-tuberculous and 53 tuberculous cases (20 active and 33 inactive).

Analysis of Tuberculous Cases

AGE	Under 15	15/ 24	25/ 34	35/ 44	45/ 59	60 & over	Total
Active Tuberculosis							
Male		6	3		3	1	13
Female		4	1	1	1		7
Total		10	4	1	4	1	20
Inactive Tuberculosis							
Male		2	4	8	7	1	22
Female		1	3	3	4		11
Total		3	7	11	11	1	33

A clinic for the diagnosis and supervision of tuberculosis is held twice weekly at the Health Centre, Mount Street, under the Regional Hospital Board. Responsibility for the prevention of the disease rests primarily with the County Council and with the Borough Council. It is chiefly in the provision of satisfactory housing that the Borough Council contribute to the prevention of tuberculosis, and it is pleasing to report that all cases recommended by the Medical Officer of Health for rehousing, have been allocated satisfactory accommodation. A diagnosis of tuberculosis does not in itself mean that an applicant should automatically be given priority over the many very deserving cases on the long waiting list. All applications from persons on the tuberculosis register are very carefully considered at the Health Department and special recommendations are made only where it is considered that rehousing would help prevent the spread of infection, or is likely to considerably influence treatment.

National Assistance Act, 1948

A number of cases were brought to the notice of the Health Department, and in all but one case it was possible to make satisfactory arrangements for the welfare of the persons concerned, without removing them from their homes. In one case, an Order for the removal of a person to a hospital for chronic sick was obtained, and on the expiration of the Order, the person decided to remain voluntarily in the accommodation provided.

Welfare of Old People.

The Bridgwater Association for the Welfare of Old People has met regularly and much useful spade work has been carried out. A Chiropody Clinic has been started and has been welcomed by the Old Folk to such an extent, that the number of sessions has had to be increased. The Chiropodists attending the Clinic, have been very generous to the Association.

Much good work has been accomplished, but it still remains for the Association to organise effective home visiting arrangements.

Housing

The following table shows the progress made during the year:-

	Houses erected during year		Houses in course of erection		Conversion to flats or dwellings.		Temporary such as Army Huts etc.
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	108	-	195	-	-	-	-
Private Enterprise	17	-	9	-	-	-	-
S/W. Co-operative Housing Society	36	-	48	-	-	-	-
Total	161	-	242	-	-	-	-

Houses required

(a) To replace those unfit ... 305
(b) To abate overcrowding ... 35
(c) Where conditions are unsatisfactory, e.g. two families living in same house, but not included in (a) or (b) ... Nil.

Total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year ... 1,574.

Houses occupied that have been condemned as totally unfit ... 5.

No. of houses found overcrowded ... 5.

Allocation of Houses.

The Council use a Points system to enable them to assess application for rehousing. Special points are awarded on health grounds and this award is made by the Medical Officer of Health. All medical certificates received in connection with an application for rehousing are considered by the Medical Officer of Health who holds frequent meetings with the Housing Manager. All the factors in each case are then carefully considered and an appropriate award of points is made. It is considered that this arrangement, whereby applications are considered jointly and personally by the Medical Officer of Health and the Housing Manager, is a most satisfactory one, and ensures a satisfactory award of "health points".

Factories Act, 1937 & 1948.

The following particulars indicate the action taken under Part 1 of the Factories Act, 1937.

Premises	Number on Register	Number of Insps.	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 & 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	62	12	-	-
ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.	70	55	-	-
iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding out workers' premises)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	132	67	-	-

	No. of cases in which defects were found				No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
			Referred		
	Found	Remedied	to H.M. Insp.	By H. Insp.	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	1	1			
Overcrowding (S.2)					
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)					
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)					
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)					
Sanitary conveniences(S.7)					
(a) Insufficient	2	1		2	
(b) Unsuitable or defective	5	5		5	
(c) Not separate for sexes					
Other offences against the Act (Not including offences relating to Outwork)	7	1		7	
Total	15	8		14	

Nature of work.	No. of outworkers in Aug. list required by Sect. 110(1)(c)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to Council.	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists.	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises.	Prosecutions.
Wearing apparel (making)	77	-	-	-	-

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

1. Water Supply.

Regular bacteriological examinations have been made of both the raw water and the water going into supply.

Results were as follows :-

Ashford Reservoir.

Untreated Water. Five samples were examined, all of which showed evidence of contamination.

Water after treatment. Fourteen samples were examined and all but one gave excellent results.

Durleigh Reservoir.

Untreated water. Five samples were examined, all of which showed evidence of contamination

Water after treatment. Fourteen samples were taken and all but one gave excellent results.

Arrangements have been made to ensure that all persons working in connection with the water supply are medically examined before commencing their duties. All possible steps are taken to exclude carriers of the enteric group of fevers.

2. Swimming Baths.

Supervision has been maintained over the condition of the water in the swimming baths. Samples of the water from both baths have been submitted for bacteriological examination and have given good results, but the existing method of sterilisation is extremely crude and cannot be compared with the filtration and chlorination plants which exist in modern swimming baths.

3. Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The records given in the Chief Sanitary Inspector's report show the number of insanitary conditions dealt with.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR 1951.

To:-

The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Bridgwater.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1951. This report is still of necessity very curtailed.

Complaints.

During the year 162 complaints were received and dealt with under the Public Health or Housing Acts, and in addition there were 154 complaints of rat infestation. This is a slight increase on the figures of 1950.

In 13 cases Statutory Notices were served, but in no instance was it necessary to take legal proceedings.

Housing.

172 houses were inspected for the purpose of having housing defects remedied whilst 71 houses were systematically inspected under the Housing Regulations. 3 Demolition Orders were made and 2 houses demolished. Undertakings not to use the houses for human habitation were given in respect of 3 houses.

The improvement in the supply of labour and materials available for the repair of existing houses has been maintained, as is shewn by the amount of repair work shewn in the schedule at the end of the report. Frequently, however, cases arise where the income the owner derives from the house is insufficient to keep the house in repair, and in some cases owners would rather be served with a Demolition Order than a Repair Notice.

Overcrowding.

12 cases of overcrowding were abated during the year, an increase of 7 as compared with 1950. 43 inspections were carried out for the purpose of ascertaining if overcrowding existed and 5 new cases were found. The number of known cases remaining unabated at the end of the year was 36. No systematic inspections were carried out during the year, however, and the number of actual cases must be greatly in excess of the number known. The acute shortage of housing accommodation makes the abatement of overcrowding very difficult, especially in cases where the actual number of persons is only slightly in excess of the permitted number.

Disinfection.

Disinfection is carried out free of charge after cases of notifiable infectious disease. In other cases a charge is made. The purchase of a light van by the Council has resulted in an improvement in the method of collecting and returning bedding.

Verminous Premises.

The number of houses found to be verminous was 6, a decrease on the figure for 1950.

Meat and Foods.

Under the Government Scheme slaughtering is carried out at Weston-super-Mare, and, therefore, the only meat inspection is that of pigs for home consumption, casualties and the inspection of meat at butchers' shops.

A large quantity of other foods has been condemned and in this connection over 250 visits have been paid to grocers and similar shops. The following is a list of food condemned :-

Beef	180 lbs.
Wet fish	2 cwts. 72 lbs.
Potatoes.	10 cwts.
Canned fish	76 tins.
Canned ham	18 cwts. 33 lbs.
Other canned meat	452 tins.
Canned fruit	515 tins.
Canned vegetables	344 tins.
Canned soup	37 tins.
Canned milk	242 tins.
Fish and meat paste	22 jars and tins.
Pickles and sauces	2 jars.
Jam	67 tins and jars.
Bacon	90¾ lbs.
Cheese	2 cwts. 46½ lbs.
Dried fruit	74½ lbs.
Sausages	30 lbs.
Apricot pulp	5 tons 10 cwts.
Biscuits	1 cwt.
Other foods	2 cwts. 14½ lbs.

Food Premises.

A survey is being carried out of all food premises and catering establishments. In this connection, fourteen establishments have had appliances fitted to ensure a constant supply of hot water.

Dairies and Milkshops.

The number of persons retailing milk in the Borough is now 24, whilst there are 12 dairies. This is a decrease of 4 retailers and 2 dairies as compared with last year.

The quantity of Graded milk sold in the Borough is still increasing, there being 9 retailers selling Tuberculin Tested milk and 1 selling Pasteurised milk.

71 samples of Graded milk were examined during the year and all but one were satisfactory.

Ice-Cream.

The number of premises registered for the manufacture or sale of ice-cream is as follows :-

Registered for manufacture and sale	3
Registered for sale only	49
Total.	52

In only 1 case is the manufacture of ice-cream being carried out. There has been a further increase in the amount of wrapped ice-cream sold, with a consequent decrease in the quantity of "loose" ice-cream.

79 samples of ice-cream were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year and these were provisionally graded as follows :-

Grade 1 - 70. Grade 2 - 6. Grade 3 - 3. Grade 4 - Nil.

These results are a tremendous improvement on those obtained in 1950, when only 60% of the samples examined were placedin Grade 1.

Rats and Mice Destruction Act.

The systematic destruction of rats and mice is carried out satisfactorily. There are two fully trained Rodent Operators on the staff and the system of block control is being operated.

Two maintenance treatments of the sewers were carried out with excellent results and the Refuse Tip received regular attention.

Staff.

Mr. C.W. Richards, Additional Sanitary Inspector, has carried out all the duties appertaining to the Office with complete satisfaction.

Summary.

Inspections made during the year.

General Sanitation:-

Water Supply	50
Drainage	278
Stables and Piggeries	28
Houses let in lodgings	5
Factories	67
Rats and mice	51
Shops	110
Inns	47
Swimming Baths	77
Public Conveniences	148
Smoke	3
Miscellaneous	156

Housing:-

Houses inspected under Public Health Acts	172
Visits paid to the above houses	803
Houses inspected under Housing Acts	71
Visits paid to the above houses	146
Houses inspected in connection with overcrowding	43
Visits paid to the above houses	52
Verminous premises inspected	14
Visits paid to the above premises	25
Miscellaneous	30

Infectious Diseases:-

Inquiries in cases of Infectious Diseases	4
Visits re disinfection	4
Miscellaneous	3

Meat and Food Inspections:-

Visits to Slaughterhouses.	41
Visits to Shops and Stalls	4
Visits to other premises for meat inspection	8

Visits to Butchers	36
Visits to Fishmongers and Poulterers	14
Visits to Grocers	212
Visits to Greengrocers and Fruiterers	5
Visist to Bakehouses	24
Visits to Fried Fish Shops	11
Visits to Dairies and Milkshops	21
Visits to Ice-cream premises	126
Visits to Restaurants & Catering Establishments.	23
Visits to Food Preparing premises	33
Miscellaneous	31
Visits to Market Stalls	57

Explosives:-

Visits in connection with explosives	63
Visits in connection with Petroleum Spirit	6

Work done:-

Complaints investigated	162
Rat complaints investigated	154
Choked drains and sewers cleared	18
Drains relaid	3
Drains or sewers repaired	10
New drainage laid	22
Inspection chambers provided	2
Soil vent pipes repaired	2
Defective ceilings repaired	42
Defective chimneys repaired	10
Defective doors repaired	24
Defective eavesgutters and downpipes repaired	31
Defective firegrates and ranges repaired	12
Defective floors repaired	27
Defective flushing cisterns repaired or renewed	15
Defective handrails repaired	-
Defective plastering repaired	46
Defective roofs repaired	64
Defective scullery troughs repaired or renewed	3
Defective scullery wastepipes repaired	8
Defective staircases repaired	8
Defective urinals repaired	4
Defective walls repaired	10
Defective washhouses repaired	2
Defective washing coppers repaired	6
Defective water closets repaired	23
Defective windows repaired	33
Defective yard paving repaired	1
Dampness remedied	1
Ceilings whitened	28
Rooms distempered or papered	30
Sashcords renewed	16
Cold water supply provided	5
Hot water supply provided	14
Flushing cisterns provided	1
Lavatory basins provided	3
Scullery troughs provided	3
Urinals provided	2
Water closets provided	4
Additional windows or ventilators provided	3
Food stores provided or repaired	2
Washing coppers provided	1

Overcrowding abated	12
Verminous premises cleansed	6
Premises disinfested from rats or mice	163
Premises cleansed	2
Other nuisances abated	7
Shop Act forms provided	35

I am, Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

R.K. LEAN.

Chief Sanitary Inspector.